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今日北京

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TANG SPIRIT

THE IMAGE OF THE
CHINESE RIDER IS BURNED INTO
XU SONGBO'S MIND **P.4**



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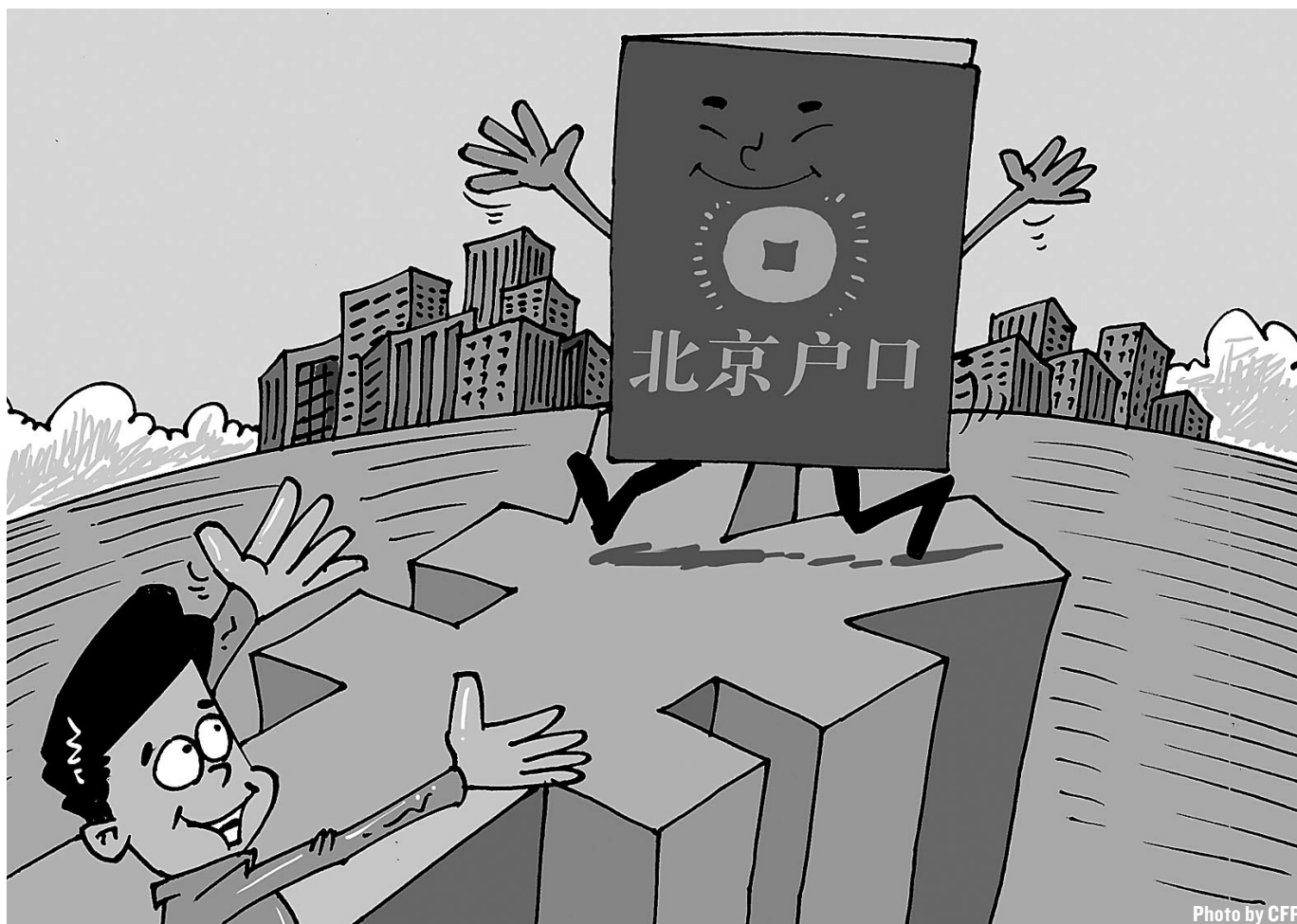
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FEATURE STORY



Hukou Benefits Breed Thriving Black Market

BY LYNNE WANG

Permanent residence in Beijing is the dream of many *beipiao*, the migrants who struggle for a better life in China's capital.

Created in 1958, the hukou household registry system was designed to stabilize Chinese society at a time when farmers were leaving their lands to find work in the city. By dividing households into urban and rural hukou categories, farmers became tied to their lands where they were expected to provide the low-price agricultural products needed to subsidize the development of cities.

The economic earthquake that was the early 1980s brought millions of migrants to the cities. Many dreamed of staying permanently to enjoy access to superior education, healthcare and social resources.

But gaining residence in a first- or second-tier city is amazingly difficult. In Beijing, many public resources remain off-limits to migrants and the number of hukou conversions allowed tightens annually.

Hukou on the Black Market

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, Beijing was home to more than 8 million migrants last year. That number is expected to swell by 5.6 percent by the end of 2014; fewer than 180,000 will be able to acquire a

Beijing hukou.

To combat migration, policymakers are continuing to tighten the city's hukou restrictions. Only 10,000 hukou are being set aside for new graduates this year.

But with such intense demand and strict conditions, there is a booming black market for Beijing residence papers.

Earlier this month, a man surnamed Zhang was sentenced to 12 years in prison for illegally buying and selling Beijing hukou.

Over the last six years, Zhang repeatedly bribed a local officer in charge of household registrations to help process Beijing hukou for migrants. Zhang paid 1.5 million yuan in bribes to the police to secure hukou for 30 migrants – his own take amounted to some 3 million yuan.

"In 1998, the price of a Beijing hukou was about 10,000 yuan on the black market. Today, a hukou and a working position could be priced up to 700,000 yuan with many clients on a waiting list," said a black market insider who refused to be named.

It's not hard to understand why a formal document has become a commercial product that commands sky-high prices. Possession of a Beijing hukou carries no shortage of invisible advantages.

Education Shortcut

Yue Mei is a migrant from Huai'an, Jiangsu province who has lived in Beijing for 20 years with her husband, a construction worker, and their 16-year-old son. Although the boy was born in Beijing and grew up here, he will be sent back to their hometown to take the National College Entrance Exam.

It's a road that families without hukou are forced to take.

"Although the Beijing government is allowing eligible migrant students to take the Entrance Exam here, the students can only test into vocational school. We've paid too much for that," Yue said.

Indeed, the difference in educational costs between a local family and a family from any other province is staggering.

The city's education policies make public kindergarten the exclusive domain of local children and low local tuition fees keep them full.

"The average price of tuition fees for public kindergartens in Beijing is around 1,200 yuan per month. The first three years of K-12 education for a Beijing child will cost 43,200 yuan," said one mother at BabyTree.com, a forum for young parents.

By contrast, migrants have to send their children to private kindergartens, where

fees begin at 2,600 yuan and rise rapidly, according to data from Beijing Bureau of Commodity Prices. For an out-of-province child, education costs more than double.

That trend continues through primary, middle and high school, according to *China News Weekly*. "Non-native" students have to pay 3,000 yuan per year for a "sponsorship fee" in primary and junior high school and a 10,000 yuan "school selection fee" in high school.

Settling Down

Another obvious advantage for Beijing hukou holders is a reduced price when buying a housing unit.

Since 2008, Beijing has been providing homes at below-market prices in a social welfare program designed to ensure local hukou holders can afford an apartment.

Last year, the most expensive of these subsidized housing units cost 11,000 yuan per square meter while the average price of normal commercial housing was more than 23,600 yuan per square meter.

Even if a migrant is interested in a commercial property, he or she must be able to demonstrate having paid into the Beijing personal income tax and social welfare pool for the previous five years.

"If I purchase a 60-square-meter apartment, I have to spend more than 1.4 million yuan. My local friends only need to spend 660,000 yuan," said a migrant surnamed Wu who has given up his plan of home ownership.

Housing is considered a precondition for marriage in China, and that makes family life particularly difficult for young migrants to obtain.

"Since Beijing began clamping down on real estate purchases in 2010, more than 40 percent of my clients have started demanding that their potential mates have a Beijing hukou," said Li Nan, a matchmaker at Jiayuan.com, China's most popular dating site.

In addition to housing and education, Beijing hukou holders enjoy an additional 80 benefits.

In terms of employment, public institutes and commercial firms prefer to recruit Beijingers due to support from the local government. Local hires benefit from free on-the-job training and the ability to collect unemployment insurance in the event of their termination.

Similarly, migrants seeking to buy a car in Beijing are expected to meet the same requirements as they are for home ownership. Beijing hukou holders face no such restriction. And when it comes to public transportation, Beijing's elders can ride for free.

Beijing hukou holders also enjoy better healthcare coverage and higher pension payouts.

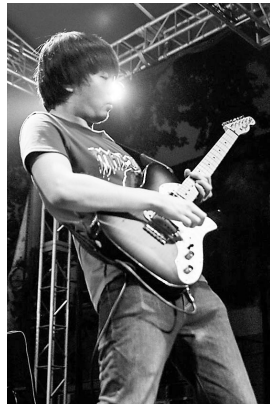
"The root of Beijing hukou's popularity is the unequal allocation of public resources. As long as access to good resources reminds tied to hukou, the big cities will always have a long waiting list," said by Wang Taiyuan, a professor of hukou studies at Chinese People's Public Security University.

A city seeking prosperity must appeal to the nation's top workers, Wang said. Finding a way to prevent hukou from becoming the next barrier to urban development is one of the toughest questions facing top tier cities like Beijing, the *Yanzhao Metropolis Daily* said in an editorial. ■

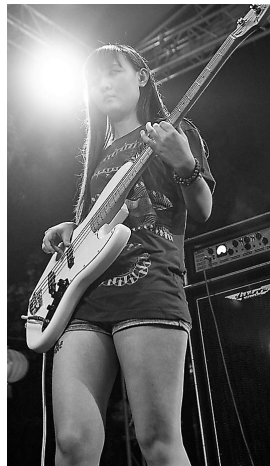
MUSIC



Qi Guanyu



Gao Fan



Xiao Lu



Xiao Su



Lü Yi



Photos by All Unknown

All Unknown Takes a Grab Bag Approach to Sound

BY DIAO DIAO

While most Chinese bands are chasing a sound similar to hard rock or noisy punk, All Unknown has a simpler goal: whatever sounds good.

Calling itself a "Japanese style band," All Unknown was founded in 2011 by the friends Gao Fan and Lü Yi. As they absorbed new members, the two became less insistent on limiting the band to a certain style, hence the name: with All Unknown, you never know what you will hear next.

After years of watching other bands and absorbing different musical styles, Lü found that the difference between mainstream and indie music really boils down to the size of the audience. Seeking to draw the best from both worlds, Lü composes most of the band's melodies with other members adding parts for their own instruments.

Lü said his favorite song is "Angel," a tune he wrote for a former love.

Lü Yi started playing guitar in 2001 and founded his first band in 2004. Since starting All Unknown, musical performance has been his sole profession. Not so for the other four members. Aside from Lü, the rest of the members maintain day jobs that keep rehearsal times shifting constantly.

Gao Fan, the rhythm guitarist, works in a bookstore as a promotion planner and art designer. He started teaching himself to play guitar after finishing middle school. He said he enjoys his job because it offers a strict environment that contrasts with the free expression he

enjoys in the band.

Drummer Qi Guanyu doesn't have a fixed job. He first got involved in the band when All Unknown's last drummer quit. He said he was attracted by the name of the band because it carried a sense of mystery and opportunity, and that even if he sometimes feels like nothing more than the band's metronome he enjoys being a member.

Leader singer Xiao Su is the oddball of the group, declaring she comes from outer space. She said the difference between mainstream and indie music is the difference between doing what the majority enjoy and doing what you yourself enjoy.

Xiao Lu, the bassist, discovered her love of music when she took an interest in what she thought was a guitar solo. When she learned it was actually played on a bass guitar, she bought one and never looked back.

While most bands have a collection of funny experiences they like to share in interviews, All Unknown declares that all the time they spend together is filled with laughs – so much so that the band's three male members are often assumed to be more than just friends.

Lü said the band is trying to build more experience and write a strong enough selection of songs to put out a new album. Though the band hasn't published an album, they already have eight songs circulating among fans. ■

site.douban.com/ALLUNKNOWN/

LIVE SHOW ROUNDUP

Beijing boasts one of the world's most vibrant indie music scenes. Support our local artists with a trip to one of this week's live performances!



Lucky Strike @ Jianghu Bar

Lucky Strike is a band who believes that music can bring good fortune. They play various kinds of music and regard music styles as one big family. The five members have their own understanding of music and combine these beliefs to amazing effect.

October 11, 9:30-11:30 pm
7 Dongmianhua Hutong,
Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng
40 yuan

Party Rock Night @ School Bar

Come by for a night of crazy, Jagermeister-fueled rock. The lineup includes Candy Monster, Secret Club, End of the World and Disaster Chat. Big discounts will be provided at night during the party.

October 11, 9:30-11:30 pm
53 Wudaoying Hutong, Dongcheng
50 yuan



Indie Rock Night @Mao Livehouse

Xuwupiaomiao is a series of live shows started earlier this year held by Beipiao Tuanhuo. This second show features The Me Guan Me's, Self Portrait, Glow Curve, The Powder Powder and Streets Kill Strange Animals.

October 11, 8:30-11:30 pm
111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng
80 yuan

Loop Beijing @ XP Club

Loop Beijing is a user-made radio for Beijing buses. Users can create soundtracks, songs or videos on the bus and upload them to loopbeijing.org. Next Tuesday, several bands are being invited as guests at the Loop Beijing show in XP Club. They're sure to make the day's public transportation a lot more interesting.

October 14, 9-11 pm
Southwest of the Di'anmen
intersection, Xicheng
30 yuan

ARTISTS



TANG SPIRIT Xia Ke Xing



Qiu Lie Tu

Photos by Xu Songbo

Masterful Murals Capture the Spirit of Tang

BY SHU PENGQIAN

Artists and writers seeking the pinnacle of Chinese civilization often turn to the Tang Dynasty, an era of openness and innovation credited with fostering some of the finest art and poetry in the history of Han civilization.

It's no surprise that such an amazing era would provide similar inspiration to Xu Songbo, a professor at the Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts who attempts to capture the Tang spirit in his breath-taking oil compositions.

In the paintings collected in Tang Feng, his exhibition, Xu Songbo focuses on the dynasty's obsession with horsemanship and the hunt.

Lin Yuan Ta Ge Tu depicts a well-dressed rider taking in the northern scenery. In Xia Ke Xing, a mounted archer searches for prey as his horse charges ahead.

Few creatures other than horses and humans make an appearance in Xu's works. "I grew up in the 70s, and our generation had comic books instead of cartoons. Most of the comics told the stories of ancient dynasties, and the horse was the finest vehicle of the era," he said. "Horses have been burned into my mind since childhood."

But Xu's works show as much of his own affinity for equines as the noble animal's status in Chinese culture.

The horse arrived in China with the charioteers of the Shang dynasty (1600-1046 BC). By 400 BC, they had become a symbol of prestige in addition to a tool of warfare.

Judging by idiomatic expressions, the horse is second only to the dragon among China's beloved animals. A willful person is often compared to "having the vigor of a dragon or a horse" and horses are said to pave the way to success. Some scholars even judge the success of ancient dynasties by the development of their horse culture.

"If we evaluate Tang by such criteria, it would be the heyday of the nation," Xu said. Tang rulers embraced the horse like no other Han-founded dynasty. The majority of cultural relics like the Six Steeds of the Zhao Mausoleum and Tricolor Horse prove that argument. Tang's equine obsession has its roots in the Xianbei, an ancient group of Mongolic nomads who once dominated today's eastern Mongolia, Inner Mongolia and North-east China. Historical records show that the founders of Tang were Han Chinese generals who had been in the employ of the Xianbei state. As military men experienced in nomadic warfare, they brought the love of the horse to the imperial court.

Tang was one of the greatest powers in the world during its era, annexing many of its neighboring states and maintaining diplomatic relations with South and West Asian powers, the Abbasid Caliphate and a handful of European nations. For tributary states in the Tarim Basin or Transoxiana, fine steeds were a customary gift for the court.

Tang Dynasty may have been the most cosmopolitan era in China history. Long noted for its religious tolerance



Tangfeng Bailu

and comparatively free exchange of cultures, Tang's pluralism is something Xu attempts to reflect in his paintings. In Qiu Feng Jin, several of the men are depicted in the costume of other ethnic groups and wielding distinct weapons.

"As an artist, Xu uses positive energy to recast the zeitgeist of bygone eras in the perspective of modern people," said Zhang Siyong, the curator. Xu previously explored traditional culture in his Chang Feng and Dao Wen series.

"When I was a little boy, the poems my teacher taught gave me an obscure impression about Tang," Xu said. "I started to understand it better when painting comic books in university." He continued his studies in the Mural Painting Department of the Central Academy of Fine Art.

But Xu's attempt to recapture the spirit of Tang Dynasty is the result of an uncomfortable fact: Chinese culture is wandering further and further from its roots.

Although many now recognize the importance of preserving China's cultural roots, few take any meaningful action to preserve them.

Xu says Han costume fans and students of literature only preserve the shell of Chinese tradition while losing sight of its spirit. From his point of view, the spirit of traditional culture can be summed up as one of confidence, freedom, tolerance, wisdom, romance and initiative.

"It will take the effort of several generations to find our roots – the spirit of traditional culture," Xu said. ■

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CINEMA



Chasing Freedom in the Golden Era

BY DIAO DIAO

The years between 1920 and 1940 were a tumultuous time for China. Stuck firmly between the fall of the empire and open war, the two decades saw the country attempt a transition to democratic rule.

For young people of the era, it was a time of ideals, dreams and love.

Xiao Hong, one of the most exceptional women of the era, would become one of the most influential writers in Chinese literary history. Her flight from Harbin to Hong Kong was a story of heart-breaking love, faith and struggle.

The Golden Era, a new biopic of Xiao Hong starring Tang Wei, Feng Shaofeng and Hao Lei, offers a new take on the writer's passionate life and Chinese society in transition. It also introduces many of the people Xiao Hong encountered who would leave their mark on later generations.

Although a pioneer and symbol for women in the 1930s, Xiao Hong was regarded as the era's "most miserable female writer." In spite of her pale complexion and delicate frame, she was quite different from her conservative peers.

In 1930, she left home to escape an arranged marriage and live with her class-



mate. When she became pregnant, he threw her out. Xiao Hong began writing and sending her articles to the newspaper where her tenacity won readers' hearts.

She met Xiao Jun when she sent her articles to the newspaper where he worked. Brave and intelligent, he was

a gifted athlete and writer. Xiao Jun helped Xiao Hong through some of her toughest times and shared her interest in literature. However, his strong chauvinism eventually caused their relationship to disintegrate.

Famous writer Lu Xun also helped Xiao Hong in her career. Lu Xun appreciated her original ideas that conflicted with conservative tradition and the two often talked a lot about how to change society. Xiao Hong would later describe Lu Xun in one of her books and showed a very different and more real image of the revolutionary writer.

Other historical figures who appear in the film include Ding Ling, a pioneer of the Chinese feminist movement, and Hu Feng, one of Xiao Hong's best friends.

The title of Xiao Hong's most famous work, *The Field of Life and Death*, was coined by Hu Feng. His wife was Mei Zhi, a famous writer of children's literature.

Although the film focuses on a period with which many young viewers may be unfamiliar, *The Golden Era* provides ample background information that will allow anyone unfamiliar with history to follow and enjoy the story. ■

Photos by Douban.com

Fairytale Collection for Adults

世界上
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都是写给大人看的

韩寒监制



「一个」App 人气作者
「南极洲最伟大作家」
陈晨 的首部黑童话故事集

※ 欢迎来到陈晨的不科学不靠谱不可能世界
※ 成年人请在未成年人的陪同下阅读
※ 要知道，与众不同的不只是书名哦

BY DIAO DIAO

Aspiring novelist Chen Chen recently published his first collection of 23 short stories on One, a popular Chinese app that recommends new artists and writers.

Titled *All Fairytales are for Adults*, the collection of stories is aimed at young adults struggling in the big city.

The main story, "Penguin in the Freezer," tells about a single man's curious relationship with an avian. Although shocked and annoyed by the bird at first, he gradually becomes accustomed to life with his new freezer mate. But the sudden disappearance of the penguin shakes up his life after getting accustomed to it.

The book includes two thirds of Chen's stories, many of which have been previously recommended by One.

Known for his rich language and humorous style, Chen represents many young writers born in the 1990s. His odd tales revel in the strange and have fresh ideas about school, society, love and life.

Many adults say there are no fairytales in the adult world. Happy endings don't exist because life keeps going, and that's where people have to learn to survive and struggle onward.

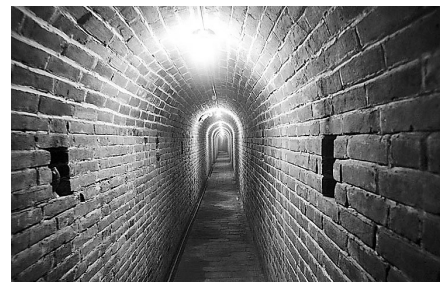
But *All Fairytales are for Adults* offers the hope of a "greater happiness" beyond the happy ending: one that young adults will have to struggle to find on their own. ■

Photo by Douban.com

A LOCAL OUTINGS



Photo by CFP



Zhangfang

Photo by CFP



Yongdinghe

Photo by Wuweilaowang

Follow the Footsteps of History

Beijing's ancient paths bear the footsteps of history. From trade to military use, the lost roads tell many stories. Retrace these routes to discover historic battle sites and the passages of ancient pilgrims.

BY YANG XIN



Shifoling

Photo by CFP



Ancient hoofprints

Photo by CFP

Zhangfang Ancient Path

Zhangfang might be one of Beijing's best kept secrets.

Located in the far southwest of the city some 80 kilometers from the downtown, Zhangfang is bounded on the east by the Taihang Mountains and on the south by the Juma River. The town is blessed with both picturesque scenery and ample historical sites.

Discovered in 1991, the Zhangfang Ancient Path follows a war tunnel dug in the Northern Song Dynasty (AD 960-1127) by Emperor Song Zhenzong. It is 4 meters deep and 2 meters wide and follows the distinct architecture style of the Song and Liao dynasties. The tunnel branches off into weapons rooms, command centers and sleeping quarters that offer insight into ancient military and political organization.

The ancient tunnels extend in all directions and connect to four gate towers. They were an invaluable part of the outpost during its heyday.

Legend says that Ren Gelao, a minister in the Ming Dynasty, was tasked with restoring the tunnels for military use. Ren allegedly altered the tunnels to make it convenient to access his ancestral graves. Irritated by this supposed dereliction of duty, the emperor had Ren beheaded. Years later, when the emperor realized his hasty actions, he ordered a golden head to be cast for Ren. Grave robbers have been seeking it ever since.

Take Bus 917 or 836 at Tianqiao or Liuliqiao stations and get off at Zhangfang Station.

20 yuan

Yongdinghe Ancient Path

Yongdinghe Ancient Path is located at the junction of Yongqing County and Anci, Hebei province. In wartime, the path served as a buffer zone between the Song and Liao militaries. As such, it preserves substantial cultural and warfare artifacts.

The 300-square-kilometer war path has been called "the Underground Great Wall" for its complicated structure and grand scale. Historic sites include the grave of Song General Meng Liang, the graves of numerous soldiers and relics related to the Yang military family.

Sites of interest include a tablet and pavilion erected by the Qianlong Emperor, stone tablets from the Tang Dynasty, a white tower of the Liao Dynasty and the former homes of several ancient scholars.

This section ancient path is relatively long, and hikers are advised to limit their trip to the section between Mentougou and Youzhou. At 12 kilometers, the section has both roadways and pedestrian paths.

Shifoling Ancient Path

In the Yuan and Ming dynasties, Beijing's western hills had abundant coal. Villagers often carted coal to sell in the city center. As time passed, a trade route formed to it with the mountainous west.

Shifoling Ancient Path marked by road monuments erected during its use in the Ming Dynasty (AD 1368-1644). Unlike most ancient paths, Shifoling Ancient Path faces cliffs on one side. The cliffs descend to the drained Yongding River and a railroad.

Modern visitors are likely to miss the stone slabs laid during the Ming Dynasty. Spaced about a meter apart, the heavy slabs

help to prevent erosion while offering a foothold. The path gives way to a steep bluff where ancient mercenaries used to mine coal.

Cliff inscriptions on the palisades carved during the Ming Dynasty have remained over the centuries. Walking along the path, one can see the right side is decorated with three Buddha stone carvings. The name Shifoling literally means Stone Buddha Hill.

Be sure to pack hiking shoes, a walking stick, knee pads, long-sleeved warm clothes, gloves, rain gear and a strong flashlight.

Take Bus 929 from Pingguoyuan West Subway Station and get off at Jiuyuanpaifang.

Lutan Ancient Path

This path was used as pilgrimage passage for the Qianlong Emperor when traveling to the Jietai and Tanzhe temples, two old temples on the Lutan Ancient Path.

Nowadays, most parts of the path have been occupied by the National Highway. The reserved section stretch from Jietai Temple to Shifo Village.

The ancient path crosses through Shifo Village. Even though it has been incapable of serving modern transport, local people have preserved the historic path.

Take Bus 931 from Pingguoyuan West Subway Station. Get off at Jietai Temple and turn right. Turn left at the crossroads and right after crossing the yard gate up the road. Walking until you cross a parking lot and you will be at the path within minutes.

Q CLASSIFIEDS

COMMUNITY



Pilates Sessions

PetiaBotcheva is certified in The Pilates Method by the Physical Mind Institute in New York. She trained under the guidance of Master Teacher and Celebrity Trainer Maria Leone, owner of Body Line Fitness in Beverly Hills.

This exercise system strengthens the "powerhouse," defined as the abdomen, back and buttocks, to stabilize the body and enable it to move freely. It dramatically and rapidly improves strength, flexibility, posture and overall alignment of the musculature and skeleton without increasing bulk.

Pilates is an indispensable tool for athletes and unconditioned people alike enabling them to develop coordination, aesthetic form, strength and balanced posture.

- ⌚ 5:30-6:30 pm, October 12 and 26
- ➔ Kocoon, B1, The Opposite House, Sanlitun Village North, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang
- 💎 180 yuan (one session), 1,500 yuan (10 sessions)
- ☎ (010) 6410 5016
- 🌐 kocoonspalounge.com



Culture Khan Kon 2014: Beijing

Ready your dice and pack the cards! Khan Kon, the premier gaming convention in China, is back for more fun.

From board games to world-class RPGs, this year's attendees can look forward to the addition of game industry panels, workshops on narrative design, game session management, Magic the Gathering tournaments, Khan Kon exclusive prizes and war game miniatures. RPG game sessions will include options for Dungeons and Dragons Next, Trail of Cthulhu, Vampire the Masquerade and the Khan Kon-only Pathfinder content!

Come try new games, learn more about the game making process from industry professionals and meet fellow gamers in your area.

- ➔ Beijing Starmoon Hotel, 9 Jiuxianqiao Nan Lu, Chaoyang
- ⌚ 10 am-6 pm, October 25 and 26
- 💎 P75 yuan for single day, 120 yuan for two-day membership
- ☎ (010) 6432 9341/1041
- ✉ contact@khankon.co



'Scratch Night' of Experimentation

Beijing artists are coming to Modernista for an experimental crossover performance by local artists. "Scratch Night" is a popular theater activity in the UK that gives artists the chance to test their work in front of a live audience. The evening usually takes on a rough and ready approach with a few short plays by different artists all shown in one night.

Scratching Beijing allows local artists, musicians, writers and directors to come together and "scratch" beneath the surface.

- ➔ Modernista, 44 Baochao Hutong, Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng
- ⌚ 9:30 pm-12:30 am, October 27
- ☎ 13691425744
- ✉ modernistabj@yahoo.com

DINING



Jack-o-Lantern Carving Contest

Select a pumpkin and decorate or carve it while quantities last. The creations will be displayed and lit up as jack-o-lanterns for The Schoolhouse's Saturday evening dining session and judged by its team.

Prizes will be awarded in three categories: children 12 and younger, teens and adults 18 and older.

The winning child will receive a certificate for a free Birthday Party at The Schoolhouse for up to 12 kids with hamburgers, fries and a birthday. The winning teen will receive a certificate for a free sleepover at Schoolhouse Home with popcorn, soda and breakfast. The winning adult will receive a certificate for a weekend getaway for two including a Saturday night in a Superior Room at the Brickyard and credit for 500 yuan in food and beverages at The Schoolhouse.

The Schoolhouse will keep the pumpkins for display. Only registered entrants will be eligible for prizes. Registration means The Schoolhouse may announce winners' names and show their creations in its marketing materials.

- ➔ The Schoolhouse at Mutianyu, Mutianyu Village, Huairou
- ⌚ 2-4 pm, October 25
- 💎 500 yuan
- ☎ (010) 6162 6506
- ✉ info@theschoolhouseatmutianyu.com
- 🌐 theschoolhouseatmutianyu.com



White Truffles from Alba in Italy

Italian white truffles are highly sought after for their natural growing conditions. This mysterious delicacy has a pale cream or brown color with white marbling that is bursting with aromas of the forest: oak seeds, roots and other elusive fragrances.

Enjoy a five-course set menu designed by the award-winning Chef Davide from Italy, who highlights this luxury with a romantic Italian touch. Signature dishes include Jerusalem artichoke soup with white truffle, comfit pork belly and olive oil; Parmesan risotto white truffle, braised beef cheek and rosemary; and Australian veal white truffle with caramelized shallots and beetroot. All dishes are meticulously prepared to ensure a perfect combination of the flavors and aromas of the white truffle.

- ➔ Cepe, The Ritz-Carlton Financial Street, 1 Jinchengfang Dong Jie, Jinrong Jie, Xicheng
- ⌚ 11:30 am-9:30 pm, in November
- ☎ (010) 6601 6666

MUSIC



Stage Dutch National Ballet Giselle

Giselle is the highlight of Romanticism. In 2009, the Dutch National Ballet presented this ballet in a new version, with a revitalized choreography to make it even more appealing to 21st-century audiences. It is one of the oldest surviving and most often danced ballets in the world, sometimes also referred to as "the Hamlet of ballet."

Respect for tradition is at the forefront of this new production by Rachel Beaujean, head artist of the Dutch National Ballet, and choreographer Ricardo Bustamante, with sets and costumes by Dutch designer Toer van Schayk.

"The choreography and the composition

of the dances are phenomenal. *Giselle* has no sell-by date. It is timeless, just like Rembrandt's *Night Watch*," says Rachel Beaujean.

Alongside deception, revenge and forgiveness, pure love plays the main role in this production. Count Albrecht, the male protagonist, is sincere in his feelings for Giselle and overwhelmed by her love and beauty. When Giselle dies of a broken heart after discovering that he is already engaged, Albrecht is left behind distraught with grief. Love vanquishes death.

- ➔ National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA), 2 Chang'an Jie, Xicheng
- ⌚ 7:30-9 pm, October 30 and 31
- 💎 100/280/400/460/520/580/680 yuan
- ☎ (010) 6655 0000
- ✉ ponypiao@dasmai.cn
- 🌐 en.damai.cn/event/tickets_70336/



I Rap, You Listen!

I Rap, You Listen is a hip-hop tour kicking off its first show in Beijing, China. Performers include both Chinese and foreign musicians. Headlining the concert are Jackson Turner, A-Mac and the Easy Boyz.

Jackson Turner, aka Heretic, is a hip-hop emcee from New York City. In 2013, he released the solo album *Long Time Coming* in collaboration with producers Soulspeak, Jay-Dub and TB-Ray. The album focused on Jackson's experiences growing up in New York and the personal and political views he developed as a result of these experiences.

Jackson has since released three music videos for this album, each receiving more than 10,000 views. He is currently working on an EP titled *The Foundation* that is scheduled for release later this year.

- ➔ DDC (Dusk Dawn Club), 14 Laoshan Hutong, Dongcheng
- ⌚ 9 pm-midnight, October 24
- 💎 70 yuan, 50 yuan (advance)
- ☎ 18611730692
- ✉ WTF@gmail.com

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SOUTHERN DINING



Shanghai Shengjian

CFP Photos



Youdunzi



Nanxiang xiaolongbao

The Search for Shanghai Snacks

BY DIAO DIAO

If one were to name the three most famous Chinese culinary traditions, the list would have to include Beijing, Sichuan and Shanghai cuisine.

Shanghai cuisine shares elements with the cooking traditions of many coastal cities and is the most popular "southern" style of Chinese cooking. Unlike the strong and spicy flavors favored further up the Yangtze River, Shanghai dishes taste light and sweet and are suitable for afternoon tea.

Most Shanghai foods are steamed, boiled or fried, and all feature flour and meat. Portions tend to be small with careful attention prepared to the delicate presentation. Xiaolongbao, shengjian and youdunzi are the three most popular Shanghai snacks.

Nanxiang Xiaolongbao

Shanghai's xiaolongbao have their origins in the late Qing dynasty. The creator was running a bakery when his son began experimenting with other kinds of breaded creations.

The southern version of xiaolongbao is made in a special way. The breadings is made of very thin, refined flour that makes the stuffing visible through the skin. It takes 50 grams of flour to make 10 xiaolongbao and each is sealed with 14 folds.

Stuffing is typically meat, though shrimp and crab can be added as the seasons change. Nanxiang xiaolongbao taste salty and sweet, and become even better when dipped in black vinegar.

Shengjian (Pan Fried)

Shengjian is pan fried in a style similar to Beijing guotier but with a better scent.

They are made by wrapping fermented flour around fresh pork and roudipong, a kind of pork oil jelly.

Shengjian are soft and white on the top and gold and crispy on the bottom. Each bite is bursting with hot, sweet juice. But be warned, they are best when served fresh.

Youdunzi

Youdunzi is a common street food in Zhejiang and Shanghai. There are three kinds of youdunzi: one made of shredded radish, a sweet one made of bean paste and one with meat filling.

Today, a lot of people combine all three ingredients. Although they are fried, they rarely taste greasy. The typical gold and crispy treats are a rare sight in Beijing. ■

Students' Choice: Meiminger Shengjian

BY DIAO DIAO

If you are looking for Beijing's best shengjian and other Shanghai snacks, Meiminger Shengjian is the place to go.

The restaurant's name may mean "unknown," but it is in fact very popular. Most of its chain stores are near the university area and students often go to Meiminger whenever they are in the mood for a taste of Old Shanghai.

The shengjian is unsurprisingly its most popular ordered dish. Four shengjian cost only 5 yuan. They are juicy inside and the stuffing tastes sweet and soft. The sesame on the surface makes it even tastier.

There's also soft guantangbao, a kind of steamed baozi with juice inside. Meiminger also serves two kinds of spring rolls: one with shredded vegetables and the other with sweet bean paste.

The shaomai, occasionally called steamed dumplings, are made of sticky rice and stuffed with mushrooms and minced meat. Jiuniangyuanzi, small balls made of fruit covered in glutinous flour, and guantangbao, steamed juicy baozi, are also top attractions. All are priced from 5 to 10 yuan.

Although Meiminger's locations tend to be small and simple, the low prices and authentic taste have won the chain a dedicated following. ■



Spring rolls with sweet bean paste



Meiminger Shengjian



Shaomai

Photos by dianping.com

MAKE YOUR OWN WITH THIS RECIPE

Easy Shanghai Noodle Salad



Shanghai noodles are another popular dish that appears often on the family table. Congyou banmian is one of the easiest and tastiest treats that's awfully hard to get wrong.

Ingredients

- 150mL rapeseed oil
- 100mL soy sauce
- 3 spoons sugar
- 5 stems of chives

Photo by CFP

The Steps

1. Clean the chives, cut into 5-centimeter lengths and allow them to dry. It's best to use thin chives, but green onions can do in a pinch.
2. Heat the rapeseed oil in the pan. Add the chives right before it reaches full temperature.
3. Prepare the chive oil. Turn the stove to a medium or small flame and fry the chives for 20 to 30 minutes until they become yellow.
4. Add the soy sauce and sugar, then turn the stove up to a high flame and stir quickly. When it comes to a boil, cook for another minute and turn off the fire. The chive oil is ready.
5. Boil the noodles until they are tender.
6. Quickly rinse the noodles in a big bowl and drain the water. Add the chive oil and stir vigorously.
7. Leftover chive oil can be refrigerated and used again. Just combine it with more hot noodles.

Meiminger Shengjian

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